

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8932

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SUBJ: IRANIAN EXPRESSIONS OF ANTI-SOVIET FEELING GROWING

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SINCE COLOMBO CONFERENCE (AUG. 16-20), WHEN LIBYA'S QADHAFI AND SOUTH YEMEN'S PRESIDENT ATTACKED IRAN'S "EXPANSIONISM" AND "AGRESSION" IN PERSIAN GULF, IRANIAN PRESS HAS GRADUALLY TAKEN ON STRONG ANTI-SOVIET TONE. GOI FEELS COLOMBO ATTACKS ON IRAN'S GULF POLICY WERE ORCHESTRATED BY USSR, AND OTHER EVENTS IN DAYS SINCE HAVE REINFORCED BELIEF THAT IRAN IS NOW TARGET OF SOVIET PRESSURE CAMPAIGN AIMED AT DRIVING IRAN AND THE U.S. APART-- ASSASSINATION OF THREE AMERICAN ROCKWELL EMPLOYEES AUGUST 28, CONSISTENT RADIO MOSCOW COMMENTARY CRITICAL OF IRAN-U.S. ARMS DEALS, SOVIET DIPLOMATIC ATTITUDES HERE, PLUS WHAT IRANIANS BELIEVE TO BE INCREASING COMMUNIST AGRESSIVENESS ELSEWHERE SUCH AS KOREA.

2. AUGUST 22 KEYHAN INTERNTIONAL (ENGLISH) CARRIED ARTICLE ON COLOMBO CONFERENCE HEADLIND "QADHAFI'S TIRADE WAS COMMUNIST DICTATED." AUGUST 27-SEPTEMBER 2 PRESS COVERAGE OF USSR ITSELF HAS FEATURED UPI STORY OF ACDA DIRECTOR IKLE'S SPEECH ON SOVIET ATOMIC WEAPONS; UPI MATERIAL FROM LONDON ON EXPANSION OF THE SOVIET NAVY; REUTER FEATURE ON POSSIBLE LIBYAN NAVAL PURCHASES FROM THE USSR; AFP ARTICLE
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ON LINKS BETWEEN "TROUBEF AT HOME" AND SOVIET FOREIGN

POLICY; AND WIRE SERVICE MATERIAL ON NORTH KOREAN TRUCULENCE AT PANMUNJOM. IRANIANS ARE ALSO AWARE OF AND RESENT IZVESTIYA'S AUGUST 27 MAJOR CRITICISM BY A. LEONIDOV OF U.S.-IRAN ARMS SALES AND TIES WHICH DRAWS ATTENTION TO DANGERS OF ARMS RACE IN PERSIAN GULF, PLUS OTHER PRAVDA CRITICISM OF RECENT DAYS.

3. FEATURE OF IRANIAN MEDIA EFFORT TO DATE HAS BEEN AYANDEGAN (FARSI) EDITORIAL AUGUST 31 BY EDITOR DARIUSH HOMAYOON (REPORTED BY USIS MEDIA REACTION) WHICH STRONGLY CRITICIZES "COUNTRY WHICH CALLS ITSELF IRAN'S FRIEND" FOR SEEKING DOMINATION OF PERSIAN GULF ("THE NEW IMPERIALISM") WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY CRITICIZING IRAN'S EFFORTS TO PROTECT ITS INDEPENDENCE AND VITAL INTERESTS FROM THREATS OF A "CERTAIN SUPERPOWER." SHAH HIMSELF TOOK RESTRAINED SWIPE AT USSR DURING RECENT AZERBAIJAN TRIP, WHEN HE REFERRED TO "PATRIOTIC STRUGGLE OF AZERBAIJANIS" TO MAINTAIN THEIR FREEDOM IN AUGUST 28 SPEECH IN TABRIZ. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. PRESS SOURCES HERE INDICATE NO FORMAL GUIDANCE HAS BEEN GIVEN REVERSING JUNE-JULY MININFO "SUGGESTION" TO EASE UP ON USSR. "HINTS" FROM SENIOR OFFICIALS--PROBABLY PRIME MINISTER OR COURT MINISTER--PROBABLY SET NEW COURSE OF RECENT DAYS. ACCORDING TO ONE WELL INFORMED JOURNALIST, GOI IS STILL SOMEWHAT DIVIDED ON HOW TO HANDLE SOVIETS IN MEDIA. ONE GROUP IS URGING FIRM STANCE AND STRONG REACTION TO SOVIET CHARGES. OTHER, WHICH ALLEGEDLY INCLUDES PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER, BELIEVES GOI SHOULD AVOID PROVOCATION. BOTH VIEWS REPORTEDLY WILL GO TO THE SHAH, WHO WILL MAKE DECISION REGARDING FUTURE POLICY.

5. COMMENT: CONFLUENCE OF EVENTS AND HEAVY-HANDED ATTEMPTS OF SOVIETS TO USE FINDINGS OF SENATE COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT TO PUT PRESSURE ON IRAN TO EASE ITS U.S. ARMS PURCHASES HAVE, AT LEAST AT FIRST BLUSH, BACKFIRED AND HAVE MERELY INCREASED IRANIAN SUSPICION OF AND HOSTILITY TOWARD USSR. HELMS

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